

Real Estate Market News and Comment

Tenement Law Endangered By Proposed Legislation

Attempts to Have Dwellings Accepted as Flats Will Destroy Health and Moral Standards as Well as Current Values

Individuals and organizations, who have guarded the housing situation in this city for many years and fought down legislative attempts to lower the high standards of construction and arrangements demanded for the use of the great majority of the city's dwellers, are decidedly opposed to measures introduced in Albany recently. If they are enacted, the claim is made that they will permit a backward movement in housing in this city which will be inimical to health and moral standards. The bills are accepted by the local guardians of the tenement house law as a wedge which, if it finds an opening, will be followed by others, and all the years of planning and constructive work will go for nothing, and living conditions will revert to oldtime standards.

Senator Dodge has introduced a bill in the Senate which, if adopted, says John J. Murphy, former Treasurer Henry C. Coughlin, and the present secretary of the tenement house committee of the Charities Organization Society, overturn the settled policy of the State of New York for the last eighteen years in regard to tenement houses. When the tenement house law was enacted, in 1901, notice was served on all parties concerned that it would not be used for tenement purposes in the City of New York unless they were made to comply with the provisions of the tenement house law in regard to new buildings. As a matter of necessity, the law permitted buildings of any type which were in use as tenement houses in 1901 to continue to be so used, preserving only such minimum alterations as were necessary to slightly improve light, ventilation and sanitation.

The tenement house law now requires that every room in all new tenement houses shall be lighted by windows opening directly on streets or court," said Mr. Murphy. "This provision also limits the depth of rooms in proportion to their width, thus insuring light and ventilation.

"The Dodge bill now proposes to apply to all old residence buildings in the City of New York the concession made it in 1901 as to matters of safety. It does this at the expense of the health of property owners must be protected even at the expense of the public health. It exempts all four-story and basement buildings, which may be converted into tenement houses, from substantially all the provisions of the law regarding new buildings.

"It directly authorizes the use of an entire floor or suite on every floor with no provision for light and ventilation. It permits the existing highly inflammable wooden stairways to remain, only applying to them a covering of plaster board at certain points, a method of fireproofing which competitors, judges deem entirely inadequate. Such buildings are dangerous enough families to make it possible to keep a janitor, unless indeed it is intended surreptitiously to introduce a fifth family living in the basement. If the buildings have not been good the neighborhood in which they are located, they

will inevitably deteriorate and will ultimately start new slum areas. Buildings of this type, which were converted into tenement houses before the passage of the tenement house law, are among the most undesirable buildings which the department has to regulate.

"Two other aspects of the question deserve consideration. First, the effect of such a law upon the new building programme which the city continually hopes to see carried out. If a large number of these buildings are accepted as flats, it will be, it will discourage investment in tenement house construction for a considerable period. It must be remembered that should these four-story and basement buildings be converted they will remain as tenement houses until they fall down, and that they will long remain a housing liability to the City of New York, after the immediate need, which is to make an excuse for their alteration has passed.

"The plea is made that such houses are often now used for boarding, rooming and lodging houses and that in these capacities they are quite unregulated. The answer is that they should be regulated. The city should safeguard its occupants by requiring proper sanitation and fire protection.

"The bill has nothing to commend from the standpoint of people who are interested in the welfare of tenants in the City of New York. It would be a serious backward step in the programme which has justified New York's position to the world in the regulation of housing for the masses. Bad conditions there are, but proportion to the total amount of accommodation provided there is probably no city which gives more careful attention to the upkeep of the apartment buildings which its people reside.

"Old residences which should not be permitted to be altered into tenement houses without the provision of adequate interior light and ventilation and proper fire protection.

"The bill introduced by Assemblyman Leininger need not a few words of comment. The tenement house law has been a four-year battle, and dollar in height may have a start only four feet in width to light and ventilate interior rooms. Of course, such a court provides less light and ventilation for interior rooms the longer it is permitted to be. Therefore, the law limits the length of such courts to thirty-five feet. Even a court simplified would be less than the healthful amount of light and ventilation for interior rooms lighting and ventilating on it.

The Leininger bill now proposes to add twenty feet to the length of this court, thereby increasing its width at either end to five and half feet. The bill as drawn conflicts with the provisions of the zoning ordinance, where a greater width is required than this bill contemplates. Instead of regarding the requisite courts now prescribed in the law they should be increased.

"This bill is a bad one. It is incompletely drawn. It was radically amended within five days of its first introduction, which is a fair indication of the amount of careful thought given to this important matter before its introduction."

Recorded Mortgages

Downtown
MATT ST. 12. \$12,000.11 long. Lawyer, Harry C. Miller, 100 West St., New York. Mortg. to and all his wife, wife, son, etc., Jan. 21 attys. Lawyer, Title & Co. 100 Broad.

JAY ST. 15. W. 1200.11. Wm. E. McGraw to Arthur Goodman, 590 Lexington av., Bronx. To James H. Ellsworth, at Hanover N.Y. 1st attys. \$12,000.11. Lawyer, Title & Co. 100 Broad.

JAY ST. 15. W. 1200.11. Richard S. Chaffee, Jr. to and all his wife, wife, son, etc., Jan. 21 attys. \$12,000.11. Lawyer, Title & Co. 100 Broad.

JAY ST. 15. W. 1200.11. Campbell and Davis, Inc. to Ador Lefebvre, 1450 st. 5th, Bronx, n.y., 1900. Mortg. to and all his wife, wife, son, etc., Jan. 21 attys. Lawyer, Title & Co. 100 Broad.

CHERRY ST. 8. w. 1200.11. Sam Shammel to John J. Kavanagh, 100 West St., Bronx, n.y., 1900. Mortg. to and all his wife, wife, son, etc., Jan. 21 attys. Lawyer, Title & Co. 100 Broad.

WASHING. AV. 17. 42. w. 1200.11. Julius H. Hess to Teichman, 100 West St., Bronx, n.y., 1900. Mortg. to and all his wife, wife, son, etc., Jan. 21 attys. Lawyer, Title & Co. 100 Broad.

SAMIE PROP. Randolph F. Harton, at 100 Broad. to and all his wife, wife, son, etc., Jan. 21 attys. Lawyer, Title & Co. 100 Broad.

DIVISION ST. 12. \$12,000.11. G. D. Gregory to and all his wife, wife, son, etc., Jan. 21 attys. Lawyer, Title & Co. 100 Broad.

JAY ST. 15. W. 1200.11. Frank M. Mulligan to and all his wife, wife, son, etc., Jan. 21 attys. Lawyer, Title & Co. 100 Broad.

JAY ST. 15. W. 1200.11. Margaret F. Roche to and all his wife, wife, son, etc., Jan. 21 attys. Lawyer, Title & Co. 100 Broad.

JAY ST. 15. W. 1200.11. Jerome B. Burg to and all his wife, wife, son, etc., Jan. 21 attys. Lawyer, Title & Co. 100 Broad.

EAST SIDE
JAY ST. 15. W. 1200.11. Leo S. Goldfarb to and all his wife, wife, son, etc., Jan. 21 attys. Lawyer, Title & Co. 100 Broad.

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